



Islamic Online University

Explanation of the Six Pillars of Faith

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Notes based on Sharh Usool Al-Emaan by Shaykh
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Module 6

الإيمان بالملائكة

Faith in the Angels

The angels are a creation from the World of Al-Ghayb¹ who worship Allah (ﷻ) and possess nothing from the Divine Qualities of Ruboobiyyah and Ulooohiyyah. Allah (ﷻ) created them from Light and granted them the complete submission to His Command and the ability to execute it.

Allah (ﷻ) said:

وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾

“And those who are near Him (i.e. the angels) are not too proud to worship Him, nor are they weary (of His worship).”²

They are great in number; none can enumerate them except Allah (ﷻ). It is confirmed from the Hadeeth of Anas (رضي الله عنه) in his narration of the story of Al-Mi’raaj³ that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

رفع لي البيت المعمور فسألت جبريل فقال هذا البيت المعمور ، يُصَلِّي فيه كل يوم سبعون ألف ملك ، إذا خرجوا لم يعودوا إليه آخر ما عليهم

“...I was shown Al-Bait Al-Ma’moor.⁴ I asked Jibreel about it and he said: ‘This is Al-Bait Al-Ma’moor where seventy thousand angels perform Salaat daily. When they leave, they never return to it (but always a fresh batch comes into it daily).’⁵

¹ Al-Ghayb: Realities and domains beyond human perception. [Translator]

² Soorah Al-Anbiya' 21:19-20

³ Which describes the ascent of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the Heavens. See for example Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, Volume 1, Hadeeth Number 345, and Volume 5 Hadeeth Number 227. [Translator]

⁴ Al-Bait (The House) Al-Ma’moor (Inhabited): in the seventh heaven parable to the Ka’bah in Makkah, continuously visited by the angels. Ibn Katheer (رحمته الله) said: “It is the Ka’bah for the inhabitants of the seventh heaven.” See Tafseer Ibn Katheer (Soorah At-Toor 52:4) and As-Silsalah As-Saheehah by Shaykh Naasir-ud-Deen Al-Albaanee (رحمته الله), Volume 1 Number 477. [Translator]

⁵ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, Volume 4, Hadeeth Number. 429.

The Belief in the Angels Comprises Four Matters:

First: The belief in their existence.

Second: To believe in those whose Names are known to us, like Jibreel (عليه السلام), and to generally believe in those whose Names we don't know.

Third: The belief in what we know from their Attributes, like that of Jibreel (عليه السلام) whom the Prophet (ﷺ) saw in his genuine shape in which he was created, having six hundred wings, and covering the whole horizon.⁶

The angel may, by Allah's Command, take the form of a man as happened to Jibreel (عليه السلام) when Allah (ﷻ) sent Him to Maryam where he appeared to her in the form of a man in all respects.⁷ Also when he came to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was sitting in the company of his Sahaabah. He (Jibreel) appeared in the form of man dressed in extremely white clothes, his hair exceedingly black; no signs of journeying were to be seen on him, and none of the Sahaabah knew him. He sat down by the Prophet (ﷺ) resting his knees against his and placing the palms of his hands upon his thighs. He then asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about Islam, Emaan, Ihsaan⁸, the Hour (i.e. Day of Resurrection) and its Signs. The Prophet (ﷺ) answered his questions after which he left. Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

هذا جبريل أتاكم يعلمكم دينكم

“That was Jibreel, who came to teach you your Deen.”

Similarly, the angels whom Allah (ﷻ) sent to Ibraaheem (عليه السلام) and Loot (عليه السلام) appeared in the form of men.

Fourth: To believe in what we know of their deeds which they perform in compliance with the Command of Allah (ﷻ), like their Tasbeeh and worship of Allah⁹ (ﷻ) day and night without boredom or slackness.

⁶ See Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, Volume 4, Hadeeth Numbers 455-457.

⁷ See Soorah Maryam 19:17.

⁸ When Jibreel (عليه السلام) asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about Ihsaan, he (ﷺ) replied:

“Ihsaan is to worship Allah as though you are seeing Him, and while you see Him not yet truly He sees you.”

For full account of this Hadeeth, see Saheeh Muslim, Volume 1, Hadeeth Number 47. [Translator]

⁹ Magnifying the Perfection of Allah, Most High. [Translator]

Some Angels May Have Specialized tasks:

Example:

Jibreel (جبريل): the Al-‘Ameen (the entrusted) on Allah’s Revelation. He (جبريل) sends him to the Prophets and Messengers.

Mikaa’eel (ميكائيل): In charge of Al-Qatr i.e. rainfall and plants.¹⁰

Israafeel (إسرافيل): Responsible for the blowing of the Trumpet on the Day when the Hour will be established and creation will be resurrected.¹¹

Malakul Mawt (The Angel of Death): Assigned to pull out the souls at the time of death.¹²

The angels appointed to the womb: When the embryo completes four months in the mother’s womb, Allah (ﷻ) send to him an angel and orders him to record his provision, his life term, his deeds, and whether he will be of the wretched or the blessed (in the Hereafter).

The angels appointed to watch and keep records of the deeds of the children of Adam (mankind): one sitting on the right and one on the left of each person.¹³

¹⁰ See Al-Bidaayah wan-Nihaayah by Ibn Katheer, Volume 1, Page Number 50. [Translator]

¹¹ See Fathul Baaree by Ibn Hajr Al-Asqalaanee, Volume 11, Page Number 368. [Translator]

¹² Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿قُلْ يَتَوَفَّنَكُمْ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ﴾

“Say: ‘The angel of death, who is set over you, will take your souls, then you shall be brought to your Rabb.’ ” [Soorah As-Sajdah 32:11] [Translator]

¹³ Allah, the Exalted, said:

﴿وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَحَافِظِينَ ۖ كَرَامًا كَاتِبِينَ ۖ يِعْمُونَ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ﴾

“But verily, over you (are appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you. (They) are honourable in Allah’s Sight, writing down (your deeds). They know all that you do.” [Soorah Al-Infitaar 82:10-12]

﴿إِذْ يَتَلَقَّى الْمُتَلَقِّيَانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ۚ مَّا يَلْفِظُ مِن قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ﴾

The angels assigned to question the dead once they are buried: Two angels come and ask him about his Rabb [Allah (ﷻ)], his religion, and his Prophet (ﷺ).¹⁴

The Belief in the Angels Yields Great benefits, Amongst Them:

First: Being aware of Allah's Greatness, Power, and Authority. Certainly the greatness of creation (in this case the angels) is due to the Greatness of the Creator.

Second: To give thanks to Allah (ﷻ) for His concern for the children of Adam whereby He assigned some of these angels to protect them and record their deed as well as other interests.

Third: To love the angels for what they have done from worship to Allah (ﷻ).

Some of those who deviated (from the Straight Path) denied that the angels are genuine forms. They said that they represent the power of potential good in creation. This position belies the Book of Allah (ﷻ), the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) and the general consensus of Muslims.

Allah (ﷻ) said:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُولَىٰ أَجْنِحَةٍ مِّثْنَىٰ وَثَلَاثَ وَرُبْعٍ

“All praise is due to Allah, the (only) Originator (or Creator) of the heavens and the earth Who made the angels messengers with wings - two, three, and four.”¹⁵

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَرَهُمْ

“(Remember!) that the two Receivers (recording angels) receive, one sitting on the right and one on the left (to note his or her actions). Not a word does he (or she) utter. but there is a watcher by him (or her) (to record it).” [Soorah Qaaf 50:17-18]

¹⁴ When a dead person is buried, two black (looking) angels having blue eyes, one called Munkar and the other Naakeer, will come to him. They will ask about Allah (ﷻ), the Prophet (ﷺ) and his religion. A Hadeeth related by At-Tirmidhee and Shaykh Al-Albaanee (رحمهما الله) said it is hasan. See At-Tahaawiyyah, Footnote Number 528, page 399, As-Saheehah, Hadeeth Number 1391, and At-Tabreezee's Mushkaatul Massaabeeh, Volume 1, Hadeeth Number 130. [Translator]

¹⁵ Soorah Fatir 35:1

“And if you could see when the angels pull away the souls of the Kufaar (at death), they smite their faces and their backs.”¹⁶

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ أَخْرِجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ

“And if you could but see when the Thaalimeen (polytheists, wrong-doers, etc.) are in the agonies of death, while the angels stretching forth their hands (saying): ‘Deliver your souls’.”¹⁷

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُزِعَ عَنْ قُلُوبِهِمْ قَالُوا مَاذَا قَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا الْحَقُّ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ

“Until when fear is banished from their (angels’) hearts, they (angels) say: ‘What is that your Rabb has said?’ They say: ‘The truth. And He is the Most High, the Great.’”¹⁸

Allah (ﷻ) also said about the people of Al-Jannah that:

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ ۖ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ ۖ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

“And the angels shall enter unto them from every gate (saying): ‘Salaam be upon you for that you persevered in patience. Excellent indeed is the final home.’”¹⁹

The Prophet (ﷺ) said in the Hadeeth reported by Abu Hurairah (رضي الله عنه) and collected in Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree:

إذا أحب الله العبد نادى جبريل : إن الله يحب فلاناً فأحبيه ؛ فيحبه جبريل ، فينادي جبريل في أهل السماء : إن الله يحب فلاناً فأحبوه؛ فيحبه أهل السماء ، ثم يوضع له القبول في الأرض

“If Allah loves a person, He Calls Jibreel that: ‘Allah loves so-and-so. O Jibreel! Love him.’ Jibreel would love him and make an announcement amongst the inhabitants of the heaven: ‘Allah loves so-and-so, therefore you should love him

¹⁶ Soorah Al-Anfal 8:50

¹⁷ Soorah Al-An'am 6:93

¹⁸ Soorah Saba' 34:23

¹⁹ Soorah Ar-Ra'd 13:23-24

also.’ The inhabitants of the heavens would love him, and then he is granted the pleasures of the people on the earth.”²⁰

In the same book (Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree), the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إذا كان يوم الجمعة كان على كل باب من أبواب المسجد الملائكة يكتبون الأول فالأول ، فإذا جلس الإمام ؛ طووا الصحف ، وجاءوا يستمعون الذكر

“On every Friday the angels take the stand at every gate of the mosque recording the names of the people one after the other (according to the time of their arrival for the Friday prayer), and when the Imaam sits (on the pulpit) they fold up their scrolls and get ready to listen to the Thikr (Khutba: the Friday speech).”²¹

The above texts clearly state that the angels are genuine forms (of creation) and not moral forces as those who deviated (from the Straight Path) say. The general consensus of the Muslims is in accordance with the above texts.

²⁰ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, Volume 4, Hadeeth Number 431.

²¹ Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree, Volume 4, Hadeeth Number 433.